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ABSTRACT

This document reports on a mini-summit meeting on family involvement in education that was held at the Education Center of the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association. The one-day working conference brought together 95 leaders from K-12 schools, higher education and research institutions, parent involvement advocacy groups, and the state department of education. Participants were knowledgeable about barriers to family involvement in education as well as cutting edge strategies for comprehensive family involvement. Comprehensive strategies are those that seek to integrate family involvement initiatives into the ongoing life of the school, promoting a consolidation rather than a proliferation of activities. They merge traditional and nontraditional opportunities for parental involvement, and they call for new ways of thinking about organizing school and community resources. This report documents the meeting's brainstorming session, including possible solutions and a vision of comprehensive supports for family involvement that emerged from the session. Also reported are discussions of future steps for constituency groups and the remarks of the Massachusetts commissioner of education and the president of the Institute for Responsive Education. Appended are the agenda, a list of participants, and an initial list of problem statements. (LB)

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# FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

# DOCUMENTATION OF A MINI-SUMMIT

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# DOCUMENTATION OF A MINI-SUMMIT

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Massachusetts Department of Education
Winter, 1991

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## FOREWORD

On Friday, January 11, 1991, ninety-five leaders from K-12 and higher education, parents, and representatives of community organizations and of a spectrum of Department of Education programs convened in a one-day "Mini-Summit" at the new Education Center of the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association in Marlboro.

Participants were invited because of their demonstrated leadership -- as school administrators and teachers, as parent outreach workers, as teachers, educators and researchers, as parent organization leaders, and as Department of Education staff -- in promoting closer ties between schools and the families of the students they serve. Those who attended represented twenty-nine cities and towns across Massachusetts; ten institutions of higher education; nine local, regional, and state level parents' organizations; and ten different program areas in the Department of Education. They represented groups and institutions that promote, practice, study, and analyze family involvement in education.

This diverse group met as a one-day "brain trust" that addressed some of the most persistent barriers to family involvement in education. The participants also shared experience of what works and visions of what more can be done so that more schools and more students can enjoy the educational benefits of family and parent involvement in education.

This Documentation is a record of the experience of sharing and vision building that occured at the Mini-Summit. We hope that it will be useful to schools, parent groups, and Department of Education program managers and implementors who are looking for new ideas on how to involve families in the schooling of their children. We hope, also, that researchers will find interesting the documentation of practitioners' insights on the obstacles they face, the possibilities they foresee, and the information and knowledge base they need in order to translate their vision into daily practice. Finally, we anticipate that the discussion at the Mini-Summit will have relevance to the institutions that prepare our teachers and school administrators, as it reveals the degree to which conventional approaches to teacher and administrator training do not adequately prepare educators for collaborative relationships with the changing American family.

The Mini-Summit was co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators, the Massachusetts Community Education Advisory Council, the Office of Community Education of the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Massachusetts Middle Level School Administrators' Association, and the Massachusetts Parent-Teacher-Student Association.

The co-sponsoring organizations' focus on "comprehensive strategies" for family involvement arose out of an acute realization of the challenges of building home-school collaboration in the context of the changing nature of the American family.

Conventional approaches for family involvement provide a limited spectrum of opportunities. They work well for the "traditional," but rapidly disappearing, family of two parents, one of whom is available during the day. Comprehensive strategies for family and parent involvement merge tratitional and non-traditional opportunities for parental involvement and integrate parent involvement into the ongoing life of the school.

Comprehensive strategies are more cost effective and appropriate in a time of diminishing resources. Comprehensive strategies also call for new ways of thinking about parent involvement and new models of organizing school and community resources to expand opportunities for families to be involved in their children's education.

The Mini-Summit was a step forward in generating these new ideas. This Documentation is intended to be a further step in the development of new models for more inclusive practices of family involvement in education.

## OVERVIEW OF THE MINI-SUMMIT

**PURPOSE:** This one day working conference brought together 95 leaders from K-12 schools, higher education and research institutions, parent involvement advocacy groups, and the Department of Education who have made contributions to or are knowledgeable about "cutting edge" approaches to comprehensive family involvement strategies in education.

Comprehensive strategies to family involvement seek to integrate family involvement initiatives into the ongoing life of the school. They promote a consolidation rather than proliferation of activities. Comprehensive approaches are more cost effective and appropriate in a time of diminishing resources.

**OUTCOMES:** Participants shared perspectives, information and recommendations that will be used for developing guidelines that extend the state-of-the-art in comprehensive approaches to family involvement.

This Documentation is a first step in the development of these guidelines.

**PARTICIPANTS:** This was an invitational conference. Participants represented the following constituencies:

- **Higher-education and research institutions** with a track record of extending the boundaries of our knowledge about effective parent involvement practices.
- **School district programs** that support family involvement in the schools.
- **Pioneering school building-based programs** that represent comprehensive and cost effective efforts to involve families.
- Independent parent involvement **advocacy and support groups**.
- **Department of Education units** that have responsibility and a track record for promoting family involvement in education.

**FORMAT:** Participants met as a "brain trust" that indentified and analyzed the impediments to family involvement, brainstormed some ways of overcoming these impediments, and concluded by recommending how each constituency can contribute to overcoming these impediments.

The structure of the day was as follows:

**Opening Plenary Session:** In their welcoming remarks, Richard Menice, President of the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association, and Susan Freedman, Director, Office of Community Education of the Massachusetts Department of Education, shared the objectives for this meeting and provided a vision of comprehensive family involvement strategies.

**Morning Small Group Session:** Each constituency group met separately to identify and discuss impediments to family involvement in education.

**Mid-Morning Group Session:** Small groups, with representatives from all of the different constituencies, brainstormed some solutions -- ways of addressing a composite list of the impediments that had been identified in the previous session.

**Midday Plenary Session:** Remarks by Commissioner of Education, Harold Raynolds, Jr., and Don Davies, President of the Institute for Responsive Education at Boston University, emphasized the importance of family involvement in any overall strategy for improving student achievement.

**Afternoon Discussion Session:** The role-alike constituency groups reconvened to consider ways that the solutions that have been generated can be implemented in their "home" situations. The groups were also asked to reflect on how the Department of Education can be helpful in supporting their work in implementing these solutions.

**CO-SPONSORS:** Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators
Massachusetts Community Education Advisory Council
Massachusetts Department of Education, Office of Community Education
Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association
Massachusetts Middle Level School Administrators' Association
Massachusetts Parent-Teacher-Student Association

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS MINI-SUMMIT

**By Richard Menice, President**
**Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association**

Everyone here today represents an important resource that will help us to reach our objectives for this Summit. In tapping into this collective resource, we all will benefit. Participants at this meeting include:

- Parent and community leaders
- Principals of schools, K-12
- Central office administrators
- Building-based parent outreach workers
- Researchers and faculty from public and private institutions of higher education
- Members of the state's Community Education Advisory Council, which provides direction to the Board of Education on school-community partnerships that strengthen education
- Representatives of the principals' association
- Representation of the MPTSA
- Representatives from a range of units of the Department of Education

The purposes of this Mini-Summit are to:

1. Advance our understanding of effective approaches to comprehensive family involvement in education.

2. Strengthen old networks and build new networks of knowledgeable and concerned individuals who are working to enhance home-school collaboration.

3. Enhance the technical assistance services of the Department of Education as it works to strengthen the bonds between schools and families.

## A DEFINITION OF COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

**By Susan Freedman, Director**
**Office of Community Education, Massachusetts Department of Education**

The Department of Education's cosponsorship of this Mini-Summit is part of its mission to build partnerships between schools and resources in the community that strengthen children's education.

Research and practice are clearly demonstrating that among the most important community resources are the families of our students. At this Mini-Summit we will share and search for strategies that ensure that all families have the resources, information, skills, and support they need to help them maximize their children's educational experience.

Experience is showing that the involvement of all families is best ensured through **comprehensive** parent involvement practices. By "comprehensive" we mean several things:

1. Parent and family involvement should be meaningful for **children in all grades**, from kindergarten through grade 12.

2. Parent involvement should encompass the **many roles** that families can play in their children's schooling: at school; at home; as individuals; and as members of groups at the school. Parents can be **teachers**, **learners**, and **supporters** as their children go through school. In addition, parents contribute to improving school as members of school-parent-community **decision making** teams. All of these roles help to strengthen children's learning and the schools in which they learn.

3. Parent involvement should be **inclusive**. When a segment of the parent population is uninvolved at the school, it is a problem for the school, not the parents. Schools have a responsibility to engage in active outreach that ensures that all families are being **included** in the school.

4. Parent and family involvement means that the **community** is viewed as a site for promoting parent involvement in education. Connections with underrepresented families - who may not be comfortable at the school for a variety of reasons - can be made through community institutions and leaders who have relationships with these families.

## MORNING SESSION: DEFINING THE PROBLEMS

### INTRODUCTION

**PURPOSE:** Participants were asked to identify and discuss impediments to stronger links between schools and families.

**FORMAT:** Participants met in small groups that brought together "role-alike" peers (e.g., groups of school administrators, parent leaders, etc.). Each group discussed and enlarged upon an original list of "impediments" that was supplied to all participants prior to the meeting. (Please see Appendix C)

The additional problems identified by each role-alike group were merged with the original list into a composite list of problems. This longer list became the focus for subsequent sessions which moved from identifying problems to developing solutions.

**OVERVIEW:** As participants enlarged the list of key problems, they also elaborated on the impediments to closer home-school collaboration. The documentation that follows summarizes the issues that were discussed.

## MORNING SESSION: DEFINING THE PROBLEMS

Prior to the meeting, participants were asked to reflect on the following list of most commonly identified impediments to home-school collaboration, based on experience in Massachusetts and across the nation.

These issues are presented below with a summary of the discussion on each issue.

1. **Most schools experience uneven and unrepresentative patterns of involvement: clearly identifiable segments of the parent population are underrepresented in family involvement activities; many of these families face economic, cultural, and linguistic barriers to involvement in their children's education.**

   The changing structure of the American family makes it difficult to obtain and sustain traditional forms of family involvement in education.

   Parents' own school experience may have been negative and painful. These negative memories create a barrier to the involvement of these parents.

   Some families come from cultures in which they are taught to be differential to public institutions such as schools, and to professionals, such as teachers. This cultural norm presents a barrier to their involvement in the school.

   Education may not be a high priority for parents of at-risk students. These families may not be motivated to be involved in their children's schooling.

   Employers may not allow family members to have release time to become involved in school activities.

2. **Family and parent involvement is seen as a peripheral, extra-curricula function for the school.**

   Schools that acknowledge the contribution of parents to children's learning may not spell out a role for the family in their mission statements.

   Schools do not always explicitly make parents feel welcome and needed.

   There is no commonly accepted professional agreement on the definition of family involvement in education.

   There is a lack of time built into teachers' schedules for family outreach and involvement.

   Teachers and principals are not professionally rewarded or recognized for any extra efforts they make to involve parents in the school.

3. **Many teachers and administrators lack preparation and adequate training in family involvement.**

   Until recently, the education profession lacked information on and appreciation of the benefits of family involvement.

   There is a lack of knowledge about validated successful models of family involvement.

4. **Many schools perpetuate policies that are disincentives for family involvement in education.**

   Even when family involvement is acknowledged to be a priority for a school, time and funds are not allocated to this function.

   Not all families are equipped or motivated to be involved in schools in the traditional ways.

   Schools solicit a narrow range of involvement, such as fundraising and helping at the school. These are not the preferred roles for all parents.

   Parents are often asked to have "token" involvement by signing-off on documents/policies that they were not meaningfully involved in developing.

   Parent coordinator positions in schools are low paying and carry low status.

   Collectively bargained workrules limit teachers' availability for family involvement and outreach activities. These contracts limit teachers' availability for after hours or early morning activities and/or events.

5. **Most of the suggested activities for increased family involvement and outreach are time and labor consuming and are an invisible add-on to the duties of school staff.**

   When family involvement is everybody's responsibility, it ends up being nobody's priority. Family involvement in education needs designated leadership and coordination.

   Schools are not organized and equipped to promote home-school communication. Most teachers, for example, do not have easy access to a telephone.

6. **Participation requirements in categorical federal and state grant programs that are intended to stimulate parental involvement often fragment a school's efforts to promote parent involvement schoolwide. These grant programs can focus the parents' attention on the discrete programs rather than on the school as a whole.**

   Schools often end up going to the same active parents, again and again, to secure their token involvement in order to satisfy the particular parent involvement requirements of different programs.

The following statements reflect a composite of the impedments that were added to the original list by role-alike groups. Each statement is followed by a summary of the discussion on this issue.

7. **There are some inherent tensions between schools and families.**

   Some school staff are uncomfortable having parents in the schools.

   Teachers are afraid of parents whom they perceive to be assertive.

   Parents are afraid of repercussions on their children if they take unpopular positions in school decision-making.

   Families are afraid of showing their lack of familiarity with school programs and are intimidated by educational jargon.

   Most family-school interactions are negative because they relate to a student's problem or failures.

   Organized parents groups are sometimes perceived as trying to run the schools.

   When parents are asked for advice that is not followed, an adversarial relationship can develop.

8. **Many parents lack the training and information to become meaningfully involved.**

   Parents are generally not aware of the many different ways in which their involvement can be beneficial to their children.

   Parents who serve on committees may feel intimidated by educational jargon and may lack the confidence that they have the appropriate levels of knowledge.

9. **Family involvement is difficult to sustain in the higher grades.**

   Students in the upper grades do not feel comfortable when their parents are in the school.

   As children get older, parent involvement decreases because of decreased dialogue between parents and children.

   Parents often feel helpless: The curriculum and school work in the higher grades is more advanced and they are not comfortable talking about it. There is no one teacher whom they feel they can identify as their child's teacher.

   Schools with upper level grades are often less receptive to the involvement of families.

   Many teachers in middle and secondary schools have limited skills and experience in interacting with the families of their students.

The school culture in middle and secondary schools often keeps families at arms length.

The physical size and lay-out of many secondary schools acts as a barrier to parent and family involvement.

10. **Educators' professional values can create impediments to parents' involvement in education.**

Some educators think parents' roles should be limited. Their attitude is that they don't tell parents how to run their households; parents shouldn't tell them how to run their classrooms/schools.

## MID-MORNING SESSION: BRAINSTORMING SOLUTIONS

### INTRODUCTION

**PURPOSE:** Participants were asked to identify solutions to the expanded list of problems discussed in the earlier session.

**FORMAT:** Solutions were brainstormed in four "mixed-role" groups. Each group included individuals from each of the five constituencies that participated in the Mini-Summit.

**OVERVIEW:** The "synergy" that resulted as different constituencies shared their perspectives produced a rich bank of potential solutions.

This richness is presented in two forms:

**Part A: "A Composite List of Solutions."** This "raw record" includes the aggregate list of solutions that emerged from the groups.

**Part B: "An Emerging Vision of Comprehensive Supports for Family Involvement."** This interpretative summary organizes the "raw record" into a composite vision of family involvement practices that reflects participants' creative thinking.

## MID-MORNING SESSION: BRAINSTORMING SOLUTIONS

### PART A: COMPOSITE LIST OF SOLUTIONS

This "raw record" of the solutions identified by the mixed-role groups has been clustered into four catagories: policy, attitudes, training, and outreach.

**Policy**

- Devise policies at all levels; be inclusive of all parties.
- Use group decision making/school-based management.
- Develop policies for flexible school and community scheduling.
- Develop documents that outline school and family responsibilities.
- Establish school-based "family centers" in schools that provide in-school services for parents (e.g., health care; social services; adult education and employment training; etc.).
- Redefine parent involvement as "home-school collaboration." Ensure that the message about the importance of family involvement comes from the superintendent.
- Establish the position of educational ombudsman, who acts as advocate for families in the system.
- Provide parents with the same information that school professionals have about the curriculum and educational policies. This provides parents with more parity in knowledge and enables them to sit as more equal partners on advisory committees, decision making councils, and planning teams that involve teachers and parents.
- Develop issue oriented committees that attract and utilize the input of parents.
- Develop family involvement policies that recognize that education happens in many settings.
- Allow teachers and administrators to define for themselves what family involvement will mean.
- Empower individual schools to determine and enhance family involvement for their school.
- Seek school committee endorsement of family involvement.
- Develop task forces to review family involvement policies.

**Attitude**

- Change the concept of parent involvement to "family" involvement in recognition of the changing nature of the households of school children.
- Treat all parties in the school as "professionals," including parent outreach workers and volunteers.
- Demonstrate to parents that they are needed by the school.
- Acknowledge that schools are not doing enough to reach out to families.
- Recognize that the American family takes many forms.
- Define clearly what family involvement means and includes.
- Don't assume that parent involvement must cost money. Don't let money be an excuse to eliminate family involvement.
- Provide personalized parent orientations to the school as well as "mass" orientations.

**Training**

- Incorporate training on family involvement into Leadership Academies, Principals' Center training, and other professional development programs.
- Provide training for teachers and administrators on involving families in the school.
- Encourage colleges and universities to develop training that emphasizes the importance and strategies of parent and community involvement in the schools.
- Provide parents with training in participation skills.
- Provide training that emphasizes the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in schools.
- Provide inservice sessions for teachers and parents together.
- Provide sensitivity training for teachers and administrators.

**Outreach**

- Take part in community events to signal that schools are ready to connect with families on their own turf.
- Go into homes so that teachers and the families of the students they serve can develop a personal relationship.

- Develop partnerships with businesses that support parent involvement in education.
- Use "neutral" sites for meetings of parent-teacher groups.
- Develop ways to involve underrepresented families in the school by seeking partnerships with community groups that are reaching these families.
- Address child care and transportation issues so parents can come to meetings.
- Use community sites for school meetings so that families who are uncomfortable in school settings can get a chance to meet school people and learn about the school.
- Involve parents and children in school meetings. Serve refreshments in order to make these events feel more welcoming for families.
- Use a range of methods of home-school communication. Use media such as cable, television, radio, etc.
- Develop parent "hot lines" and "help-lines."
- Develop family centered activities that bring families into the schools.
- Establish parent coordinator programs in which the parent coordinators are respected team members in the schools.
- Help employers to understand the importance of providing parents with release time for school participation.
- Develop a district-wide parent-teacher center that involves parents and teachers in decision making, training, and in other ways involving parents in education.
- Undertake needs assessments that inventory the needs and resources of communities that can impact family involvement programs.
- Invite the community to use the school as a site for community meetings and events.
- Hold "focus groups" with parents. Seek input on startegies for motivating parents to be involved.

## MID-MORNING MIXED ROLE GROUP DISCUSSION

## PART B: A COMPOSITE VISION OF COMPREHENSIVE APPROACHES TO FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

### A VISION FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION

1. The role of the family in education is recognized and validated.

2. The preparation and training of teachers and administrators recognizes the role of the family.

### A VISION FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1. There is an explicit school committee policy on family involvement which:

   a. Is developed in consultation with families and other members of the community.

   b. Outlines the reciprocal rights and responsibilities of the school and the home as partners in the education of children.

   c. Defines family involvement broadly and provides opportunities for parents and family members to be involved in individual as well as group functions and at home as well as in school activities.

   d. Recognizes that schools have a proactive responsibility to reach out to and include all families in home-school collaboration activities.

2. The district level policy is supported by resources and other forms of implementation assistance that may include:

   a. Establishing a position of ombudsman, who acts as an advocate for parents in the system.

   b. Developing a district-wide parent-teacher center that involves parents and teachers in decision making, training, and other activities that promote home-school collaboration.

   c. Providing inservice training for school administrators and teachers on home school collaboration. This training may cover the following areas:

      - understanding the growing diversity of American families
      - cross-cultural communication
      - roles for families as in-school and at-home supporters of their children's learning
      - participatory decision making
      - working with advisory groups

d. Supporting individual schools' outreach to under-involved and underrepresented families by:

- Forming partnerships with local area employers to help them to understand the importance of providing parents with release time for school participation.
- Facilitating the translation of home-school communications into parents' native languages where appropriate.
- Forming partnerships with community groups that are interacting with hard-to-reach families.
- Providing access to non-print media in order to communicate with the families of children at the school.

e. Providing training to families so that they have the opportunity to learn about the schools, the school program, and ways in which they can be involved.

f. Providing joint training to teachers and parents so that parents will have more knowledge about the curriculum and educational policies and can serve as more informed partners on school advisory councils and other planning and decision-making teams.

3. The district's policy is further reinforced by leadership from the superintendent's office that:

   a. Ensures that the message about the importance of family involvement comes from the "top."

   b. Makes it clear that working to promote family involvement is a valued and evaluated part of school principals' and teachers' job descriptions.

**A VISION FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS**

1. School facilities are used as a sites for community meetings and events that attract families from a broad spectrum of the school-community.

2. "Family Centers" are established in schools to provide in-school services for parents, (e.g., health care and social services).

3. The school's mission statement affirms the importance of family involvement.

4. The school's philosophy and practices recognize that:

   a. Education happens in many settings: in school, in the community, and at home.

   b. All adults who interact with students - teachers, volunteers, aides, and parents -- are partners in the education of these students.

c. Families can be involved with their children's education through at-home, as well as in-school, activities.

5. Communication between the school and the home is enhanced through:

   a. Personalized as well as large-group family orientations to the school.

   b. Multiple avenues for home-school communication, such as telephone calls, radio, cable TV, newspapers, and other printed materials.

   c. Use of parent "hot lines" and "help lines."

   d. Developing family-centered activities that bring families into the schools.

6. Parents are provided with opportunities to be involved in school decision making through issue-oriented committees that solicit parents' input on a variety of topics, recognizing that parents have differing interests and knowledge levels.

## GREETINGS AND REMARKS

**Harold Raynolds, Jr., Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Education**

After reflecting on the debate in Congress about the imminent war with Iraq, Commissioner Raynolds observed how frequently "children" and "families" came into the legislators' speeches. He vowed that, even with diminished resources in Massachusetts, the Department of Education will focus on the critical issues such as family involvement in education. The Commissioner thanked the participants in this Mini-Summit for their concern and their efforts to make family involvement in the education of their children a possibility for all families.

The Commissioner described his own efforts, as a teacher and school administrator, to expand parent involvement in schools. He noted how often it was that the parents who came to school were not representative of the ones whom he felt it was the most important for him to see. Commissioner Raynolds emphasized that parents are children's first and best teachers. He explained that by "best" he meant "most effective." After lamenting that too often the children who have abusing parents become abusers themselves, he reiterated his concern that parents can be the "best" teachers in the "worst" sense of the word. He challenged attendees to ensure that parents, who are the first and best teachers, are supported to provide the best possible developmental opportunities for their children. In addition, he suggested that new strategies are needed to reach all parents to ensure they are the best teachers - in the best sense of the word.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Don Davies, President, Institute for Responsive Education; Professor, Boston University School of Education**

Dr. Davies applauded the discussions he had sat in on during the morning and noted that over the past 18 years he has noted that the conversation on parent involvement in education has become more fashionable and acceptable. However, he observed, only the conversation has changed; the practice and policies have not changed. He asked the group how long it would be before practice catches up with the conversation.

As evidence that there is interest in change, he described the Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning that has received $6.5 million from the federal government to study how each of these stakeholders can individually and together affect the social and academic development of children. Davies and Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University will codirect this Center and will be assisted by researchers such as Susan Swap, of Wheelock College, who was participating in the Mini-Summit.

Dr. Davies asserted that if there were to be change in parent involvement in education, it would need to be redefined so that it was no longer a peripheral, trivial, and marginal enterprise. Based on the Institute of Responsive Education's work in its "Schools Reaching Out" project, this redefinition would acknowledge that:

1. Parent involvement must be redefined as **family involvement.** Schools will need to recognize that children are influenced by **families,** not only parents. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, foster parents, and other family members are important factors in children's development, especially in urban families.

2. Family involvement means **more than coming to a meeting.** There are many ways families can support their children's education other than attending meetings.

3. Families must be thought of in the context of **family and community collaborators with the school.** Many urban and non-urban families need supports that the school is not capable of providing. As is recognized nationally, schools, families, and community agencies need to coordinate their efforts to help some children to be successful in school.

4. Family involvement has to be refocused to start with the **interests and needs of families, not only of schools.** Until schools address the needs and concerns of families, they will not be able to reach and involve significant numbers of parents and families.

5. Schools must recognize that they need to provide a broad menu if they expect to reach all families. This menu goes beyond the traditional modes and includes the following comprehensive approaches:

    1. **Schools must provide help for families as they meet the basic obligations of being parents and attending to the needs of children.** Schools will need to turn their focus away from the school and toward the critical needs of parents in order to help some families with their basic survival and parenting needs.

    2. **Family help for schools should occur in and out of school and can take such conventional forms as tutoring and mentoring ones own children.** This form of parent involvement appeals to some, although not all, parents. Schools must recognize that family involvement in education can mean different things for different families.

    3. **Basic communication between schools and families must be two-way: school-to-home and home-to-school.** This communication can involve translating messages home, using cable-tv and radio, teacher-parent conferences that are held at times convenient to parents, report cards that give suggestions to parents, and other techniques for meaningful interaction.

4. **Families should be helped to promote their children's learning at home.** Schools should provide suggestions and materials for systematically supporting the school's academic programs at home, through vehicles such as Homework Hot-Lines; signing-off on homework; reading to children; etc.

5. **Parents must be involved in governance and advocacy roles in schools.** In a democratic society, institutions that have responsibilities as important as educating our children must involve families in their governance.

6. **Schools have the responsibility for orchestrating the exchange of resources, personnel, and services between and among all of the agencies that affect the well-being of children.** Families, social service agencies, churches, neighborhood centers, grass roots organizations, tenant's organizations, settlement houses, and other community resources can be brought together in coalitions that support family involvement in and support of education.

Dr. Davies noted that the new definition of parent involvement aims to reach the 90 percent of all families that are not presently involved in education. He suggested that this 90 percent does not want to be a part of the old definition of parent involvement and offered four suggestions for ways to increase their participation:

- Schools need **formal, clear, enforced policies** in local schools that are adopted by schools and unions to put into place the new definition of family involvement.

- Schools need **staffing** for family involvement; people who are responsible for doing the work that is required at the school building level. When it's "everyone's" responsibility, it does not get done.

- Schools need to use creatively sources of **funding** that can support family involvement, such as Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Special Education, and Bilingual Education funds.

- Schools need to find more creative ways to involve teachers and teachers' unions in **carrying the message** of the importance of the new definition of family involvement.

Dr. Davies concluded by suggesting that when the new definition of parent involvement is in place, we will see that practice catches up with the rhetoric on parent participation in education.

## AFTERNOON SESSION: TAKING IT HOME

## NEXT STEPS FOR CONSTITUENCY GROUPS

### INTRODUCTION

**PURPOSES:** Participants identify new ideas that they will "take home" in order to strengthen links between families and schools.

Participants also were encouraged to network among individuals/organizations from the same constituency who share the common goal of strengthening home-school collaboration.

**FORMAT:** Participants convened in the original five "role-alike" constituency groups.

The groups were asked to reflect on the solutions that were brainstormed earlier and generate some responses to the following two questions:

- What can "we" (e.g., as school administrators, parent organization leaders, etc.) do to help implement these solutions?
- How can the Department of Education support us in these efforts?

**OVERVIEW:** Each group's responses are summarized on the pages that follow.

## GROUP A: SCHOOL-BASED PRACTITIONERS

**Participants**

This group included principals, teachers, and school-based parent outreach workers from the following communities:

| | |
|---|---|
| Acton | Easthampton |
| Belmont | Fitchburg |
| Boston | Hyannis |
| Brockton | Lawrence |
| Cambridge | Lowell |
| Chelmsford | Randolph |
| Dartmouth | Springfield |
| Dudley | Warren |
| Duxbury | Worcester |

**Summary of Responses to the Question, "What We Can Do?"**

1. Start a dialogue in the community that is focused on the role of the family in education and in our school.

2. Provide a role for family involvement in schools' restructuring initiatives.

3. Appoint or assign someone in each school to be a parent coordinator. This sends a signal that the topic of family involvement is taken seriously.

4. Begin a dialogue with local business people to engage their support in facilitating families' involvement in local schools and in their children's education.

5. Draw on the School Improvement Council as a ready-made vehicle for both parent outreach and parent involvement in school decision making.

**Summary of Responses to the Question, "What Can the Department of Education Do?"**

1. Help schools to utilize the potential of School Improvement Councils as school-based parent involvement vehicles.

2. Provide a common, unifying, set of guidelines in all formula and discretionary grant programs that have a component for family involvement.

3. Make parent/family involvement a strand in the Department of Education's professional development programs, such as the Commonwealth Leadership Academy.

4. Require that certification standards include training on parent and community involvement in teacher and administrator preparation programs.

5. Assist in the development of computer-linked support network of schools trying to develop comprehensive family involvement strategies. The Institute for Responsive Education at Boston University could be a informational support resource for this network.

6. Re-convene this group annually to provide opportunities for sharing and for advancing the state-of-the-art.

## GROUP B: SUPERINTENDENTS AND OTHER CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

**Participants**

This group included superintendents, other central office administrators, and systemwide Parent Information Center Directors from the following communities:

| | |
|---|---|
| Chelsea | Northborough |
| Easthampton | Northhampton |
| Fall River | Somerville |
| Fitchburg | Springfield |
| Holyoke | Taunton |
| Lowell | Uxbridge |
| Lynn | Westborough |

**Summary of Responses to the Question, "What Can We Do?"**

1. Study more closely our communities to understand better the nature of our families.

2. Remind staff that "the public schools belong to the public" and that parents and other community members are always welcome in the schools.

3. Assess our own family involvement practices. Apply Don Davies' categories to see what avenues for family involvement we do and do not make available in our school systems.*

4. Make it clear to parents that their involvement is crucial for the education of their children and the vitality of our schools.

5. Establish a district-wide policy on family involvement in education.

6. Make professional release time available to teachers so that they can learn about effective parent outreach and involvement strategies.

**Summary of Responses to the Question, "What Can the Department of Education Do?"**

1. Provide fewer mandates and more technical assistance.

2. Develop non-quantitative methods of measuring the degree of family involvement. Provide these self-assessment tools to schools/districts that wish to strengthen their family involvement practices.

3. Revise certification standards and require family involvement training in teacher and administrator preparation programs.

4. Convene events that bring together school leaders and community-based organizations that can help schools link with underrepresented and underinvolved families.

* These categories are described in the documentation of Don Davies' remarks on page 19.

## GROUP C: PARENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION LEADERS

**Participants**

This group contained leaders from the following organizations:

- Attleboro Central Parent Organization
- Citizens' Education Resource Center, West Boylston
- City-wide Education Coalition, Boston
- City-wide Parents' Advisory Council, Holyoke
- City-wide Parents' Advisory Council, Lowell
- City-wide Parents' Council, Boston
- C.G. McDonough School Site Council, Lowell
- Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation, Boston
- Massachusetts Parents-Teachers-Students Association
- Revere PTA Council
- Sandwich PTA Council
- Somerville PTA Council
- Special Needs Parents Advisory Council, Boston

**Summary of Responses to the Question, "What Can We Do?"**

1. Work more closely with teachers' unions to develop model contracts that take into account the teachers' role in fostering family involvement.

2. Gather support from local superintendents and school committees for a formal systemwide policy on family involvement.

3. Raise the family involvement issue during the "public comment" agenda item at school committee meetings.

4. Support candidates for school committee who support family involvement.

5. Urge the school committees in our communities to establish a standing subcommittee on family involvement in the schools.

**Summary of Responses to the Question, "What can the Department of Education Do?"**

1. Consider developing a formal Board of Education Policy on Family Involvement.

2. Convene a summit meeting of leaders from parents' and teachers' organizations to develop, jointly, the key elements of a training program in parent involvement for the next generation of teachers. Meet with teachers and other educators to review and critique these elements.

3. Stress family involvement as a theme in the Commonwealth Leadership Academy and other Department supported professional development programs.

4. Disseminate fact sheets on family involvement that parent and community organization leaders can use in their newsletters.

## GROUP D: HIGHER-EDUCATION

**Participants**

This group included representatives from the following institutions of higher education:

Bentley College
Boston University
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Lesley College
Massachusetts Higher Education Assistance Center
North Adams State College
University of Lowell
University of Massachusetts/Amherst
University of Massachusetts Medical Center, Worcester
Wheelock College

**Summary of Responses to the Question, "What Can We Do?"**

1. Adopt a higher profile on the issue of how schools relate to families and the communities they serve.

   Higher-education needs to be more vocal about its stake in the K-12 system.

   There need to be more partnerships between institutions of higher-education and K-12 systems.

2. Build expertise on and sensitivity to family and community issues among teachers who are being prepared in schools of education.

3. Support changes in certification requirements to make family and community involvement part of the curriculum in teacher and administrator preparation.

   Family involvement should be infused into the whole curriculum and not addressed with only one course on "the family."

   Practicum experiences can broaden would-be teachers' perspectives. Example: a practicum in a children's services setting would provide practicum participants with an understanding of the needs of at-risk children.

4. Review and revise the curriculum of school administrator preparation practices in order to inculcate professional value for and develop skills in participatory decision making. Reexamine the explicit and "hidden" curriculum of such programs and reduce the encouragement of hierarchial management styles that hold parents and the community at arm's length.

5. Develop interdisciplinary approaches to teacher and administrator training that involve schools of social work, schools of education, liberal arts programs, public policy programs, and other related areas.

6. Recognize, validate, and upgrade the skills of Parent Outreach workers.

   A consortium of institutions,(e.g., Lesley College, Wheelock, and the University of Lowell), could develop and offer a summer training institute for parent outreach workers.

   These trained and credentialed parent outreach workers would be a richer resource for their school districts. These trained parents could orient teachers about the state-of-the-art in parent outreach and involvement.

**Summary of Responses to the Question, "What Can the Department of Education Do?"**

1. Enter into a dialogue with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents to develop a comprehensive statewide approach to parent and family involvement.

   Superintendents, as the leaders in their districts, are critical to ensuring that there will be family involvement strategies in all schools.

2. Accompany all mandates for family involvement in education with technical assistance.

3. Enlist the interest and support of the new Governor to make closer school-family ties a priority for K-12 and higher education.

4. Use the context of dwindling resources to encourage school systems to coordinate with community service agencies and establish closer links with the families of their students.

## GROUP E: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Participants**

The following Department of Education program areas and units were represented in this group:

Adult Education
Boston/Chelsea Team
Central Massachusetts Service Center
Chapter 1
Community Education
Division of Educational Personnel
Division of School Programs
Early Childhood Education
Educational Equity
Education of Linguistic Minorities
Special Education
Student Health and Developement

**Summary of Responses to the Question, "What Can We Do?"**

The Department could exert more leadership at the state level on the issue of family-school collaboration. Some suggested leadership steps include:

1. Develop a formal Board of Education Policy on Family Involvement in Education.

2. Supplement the Policy Paper with a variety of follow-up materials and activities that might include:

   a. Position and Advisory Papers that describe validated models and draw the link between family involvement and the improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom.

   b. Expand the coalition that is represented at this Mini-Summit (e.g., MPTSA amd the three principals' associations) by involving other key statewide constituencies:

      - o superintendents' association
      - o school committee association
      - o both teachers' associations

3. "Walk its talk." The Department could provide its employees who have children in the schools with work release time to take part in daytime school affairs. The Department could, as in Florida and other states, take the lead and challenge other state agencies to do likewise.

4. Develop a unified set of definitions on what family involvement means and incorporate them into program standards and grant guidelines.

5. Help local schools/districts to have flexibility in following the unified guidelines by providing a wide range of examples of different ways of following these guidelines.

6. Promote outreach to underinvolved families by:

   a. Ensuring that relevant Department of Education materials are translated into the appropriate languages.

b. Promoting the use of school facilities as family service centers. Expanded community use of school facilities helps to bring more people to the school and provides additional support services for families.

In order to exert more state level leadership, the Department could make better use of the programs/resources that already exist.

Suggestions:

1. Keep alive the legacy of the School Improvement Councils, which at their best provided both the resources and the vehicle for involving more parents at the school.

2. Learn about successful outreach strategies to poor, minority, and non-English speaking families by drawing on the experience of a range of Department units - Chapter 1, Community Education, Educating Linguistic Minority Students, and Chapter 636-funded Parent Information Centers.

3. Use successful models of parent education such as the parents-as-educators model from the Early Childhood program and from Family Literacy initiatives in Adult Basic Education.

4. Draw on the extensive experience of Special Education in promoting inter-agency compacts that address the whole child at the state, regional and local levels.

5. More fully utilize the 1988 Federal regulations in Chapter 1 that highlight the role of parents as educators and the need for parent education.

   a. Chapter 1 parent projects could model the links between parent involvement and improved student achievement.

   b. Make it clear to local districts that, persuant to that regulation, Chapter 1 funds can be used to support schoolwide family outreach and involvement efforts.

In order to draw on existing resources in the Department, the group made the following suggestions to promote more interdisciplinary, inter-program sharing within the Department:

1. Incorporate into existing intra-agency newsletters updates on parent involvement initiatives started by, supported by, or brought to the attention of any Department of Education program.

2. Establish Parent Involvement Resources/Information Center at the Department of Education to be used by Department staff, visitors, and collaborating organizations.

3. Reconvene this group (and include others within the Department) for a session on sharing models and developing next steps to promote the suggestions that come out of this session of the Mini-Summit.

## INTERPRETATIVE SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

## FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### INTRODUCTION

This summary presents some points of convergence among all of the groups on the Department of Education's role in promoting comprehensive family involvement strategies. This summary identifies concrete action steps that, if chosen as a priority, could be accomplished in the short term (1 to 2 years).

The action steps are grouped in the following four categories: policy development, new publications and materials, meetings with external groups, and new programmatic initiatives and emphases.

### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1. Develop a formal Board of Education policy statement on family involvement.

2. Revise certification standards to require the inclusion of training on family involvement in teacher and administrator preparation programs.

3. Develop a unified definition of family involvement and incorporate it into program standards and grant guidelines for Department of Education administered programs that encourage parent involvement.

### PUBLICATIONS/MATERIALS

4. Develop and disseminate Fact Sheets that show the links between parent involvement and student achievement.

5. Develop non-quantitative indicators measuring the degree of family involvement in a school/district. Provide these self-assessment tools to schools/districts that wish to strengthen their family involvement practices.

6. Incorporate information updates on any family involvement initiatives started by, supported by, or brought to the attention of any Department unit into the Department's internal newsletters.

### MEETINGS WITH EXTERNAL GROUPS

7. Convene events that bring together school leaders and community-based organizations can help schools link with under-represented and under-involved families.

8. Convene a summit meeting of leaders from parents' organizations and the two teachers' associations in order to allow both constituencies to develop, jointly, the key elements of a training program in parent involvement for the coming generation of teachers.

**NEW PROGRAMMATIC INITIATIVES**

**External**

9. Launch an initiative for community schools. Promote the use of school facilities as family service centers. Encourage the expanded community use of school facilities, in general, since it will help to bring more people into the school.

10. Develop and maintain a family involvement strand in the Commonwealth Leadership Academy and Commonwealth Inservice Institute programs.

11. Mobilize the resources of Chapter 1. Take advantage of the 1988 Federal regulatory changes in Chapter 1 that stress the role of parental involvement in supporting educational achievement and the resulting need for parent education.

    Help local school districts understand that, pursuant to those regulations, Chapter 1 funds can be appropriately used for schoolwide parent outreach and education efforts. Successful Chapter 1 parent involvement projects could model the links between parent involvement and improved student achievement and serve as pilots for other programs that involve parents.

**Internal**

12. Develop mechanisms for sharing and pooling relevant materials and expertise on family involvement from the different program areas within the Department.

**APPENDIX A**

**MINI-SUMMIT ON FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION**

**Friday, January 11, 1991**

**Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association**
**Education Center**
**Marlborough, Massachusetts**

**AGENDA**

8:30- 9:00 **REGISTRATION AND COFFEE**

9:00- 9:15 **WELCOME AND OVERVIEW** — **PLENARY SESSION** (Conference Room)

Richard Menice
President, Massachusetts Elementary
School Principals' Association

Susan Freedman, Director
Office of Community Education
Massachusetts Department of Education

9:15-10:00 **PROBLEM-DEFINITION** — **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Participants will meet in five role-alike groups in order to share experiences with and identify impediments to family involvement in education. Please consult the "blue pages" in this packet for your group assignment.

(Conference Room) Group A: School-Based Practitioners

Facilitator: Douglas Pfeninger, President, Massachusetts Middle Level School Administrators' Association

(Conference Room) Group B: Central Office Administrators and Systemwide Parent Outreach Workers

Facilitator: Gerald Croteau, Co-Chair
Family Involvement Subcommittee, Community Education Advisory Council
Superintendent, Taunton Public Schools

(Conference Room) Group C: Parent and Community Leaders

Facilitator: Patricia Campbell, President
Massachusetts Parent-Teacher-Student Association

(Library) Group D: Higher-Education

Facilitator: Earl Avery, Chair, Community Education Advisory Council
Special Assistant to the President
Bentley College

(Classroom) Group E: Department of Education

Facilitator: Ross Zerchykov, Office of Community Education
Massachusetts Department of Education

10:00-10:15 **BREAK**

10:15-11:45 **BRAINSTORMING SOLUTIONS** **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Participants reconvene in five mixed-role groups containing at least one representative from each of the five constituencies that met separately in the role-alike groups. The charge of each group is to brainstorm some solutions to a composite list of problems identified in the role-alike group session.

The groups and their facilitators are identified below. Please consult the "pink pages" in this packet for your group assignment.

(Conference Room) Group I: David Freitas
Community Education Advisory Council
Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
Bridgewater State College

(Conference Room) Group II: Paul Daigle, President
Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association

(Classroom) Group III: Barbara Aschheim
Office of Community Education,
Massachusetts Department of Education

(Conference Room) Group IV: Diane Dickerson, Co-Chair,
Family Involvement Subcommittee,
Community Education Advisory Council
Director of Youth Programs,
Higher Education Assistance Center

(Conference Room) Group V: Richard Menice, President
Massachusetts Elementary School Principal's Association

11:45-1:00 **LUNCH** (Conference Room)

Speaker: Harold Raynolds, Jr.
Commissioner of Education

Introduced by: Paul Daigle, President
Massachusetts Secondary School
Administrators' Association

1:00-1:20 **DE-BRIEFING AND SHARING** **PLENARY SESSION**
(Conference Room)

Results of the morning mixed role group brainstorming sessions are displayed and summarized.

Leader: Harold Raynold, Jr
Commissioner of Education

1:20-2:30 **TAKING IT HOME: SOME NEXT STEPS** **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Role-alike groups will reconvene and review the composite set of solutions generated in the morning brainstorming sessions. Group members are asked to respond to two questions:

- What can "we" do to help implement these solutions?
- How can the Department of Education support us in these efforts?

2:30-3:00 **FINAL SESSION** **PLENARY SESSION**
(Conference Room)

Speaker: Don Davies
President, Institute for Responsive Education
Director, Center on Families, Communities, and Schools, Boston University

Introduced by: Earl Avery, Chair
Community Education Advisory Council

3:00 **ADJOURN**

## APPENDIX B

## MINI-SUMMIT MEETING ON FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS BY ROLE GROUP

### PRINCIPALS

Clinton Burton
Neil A. Peppin School
Easthampton

Paul Daigle, President
Massachusetts Secondary School
Administrators' Association
Principal
Shepherd Hill Regional High School
Dudley

Rose Marie DiResta, Principal
Charles S. Storrow School
Lawrence

Richard Hentz, Principal
South Row School
Chelmsford

Jane Hyman
M.L. Donovan School
Randolph

Barbara Jefferson, Principal
William N. DeBerry School
Springfield

B.J. Lates
Community Education Advisory Council
Principal
Colburn School
Lowell

Virginia McDonald
Principal
Memorial School
Springfield

Isabel Mendez
Principal
Sarah Greenwood Elementary School
Boston

Richard Menice, President
Massachusetts Elementary School
Principals' Association
Principal
Chandler Street School
Duxbury

John Monfredo
Community Education Advisory Council
Principal
Belmont Street Community School
Worcester

Douglas Pfeninger, President
Massachusetts Middle Level School
Administrators' Association
Principal
Dartmouth Middle School
Dartmouth

Terry Russell
Barnstable Middle School
Hyannis

Peter Sack
Principal
Swampscott High School

Leonard Solo
Graham and Parks
Alternative Public School
Cambridge

David Wells
Principal
Warren Elementary School
Warren

Foster Wright, Principal
Belmont High School

**CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS AND SYSTEMWIDE PARENT OUTREACH WORKERS**

Lora Barrett, Director
Parent Center
Holyoke

Ellie Blute
Chapter 1 Parent Coordinator
Somerville

Tom Chea
Parent Liaison
Lowell Public Schools

Randall Collins
Superintendent
Easthampton

Karen Conklin
Superintendent
Northampton

John Corcoran
Chapter 1 Director
Worcester

Gerald Croteau, Co-Chair
Family Involvement Sub-committee of
Community Education Advisory Council
Superintendent
Taunton

Mary Crowley
Director of Volunteers
Northborough

Jeff Dorsey
Chapter 1 Director
Fitchburg

Eileen Gress
Superintendent
Westborough

Judith Kelly
Special Projects Coordinator
Springfield School Volunteers
Springfield

Peter McGinn, Director
Parent Information Center
Lynn

Michele Reynolds
Citywide Parent Coordinator
Lowell

Michael Ronan
Superintendent
Uxbridge

Kathleen Satut, Director
Parent Information Center
Chelsea

Helene Sweet, Supervisor
Springfield School Volunteers, Inc.
Springfield

George Tsapatsaris
Superintendent
Lowell

**SCHOOL BUILDING-BASED PARENT OUTREACH WORKERS**

Joanne Ackman
Parent Liaison
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School

Bruce Allen, Teacher
Warren Elementary School
Warren

Sharon Alvanzo
School-Parent Liaison
Sara Greenwood Elementary School
Boston

Jean Chandler
Parent Liaison
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School

Peter Levanos, Director of Community Services
New North Community School
Springfield

Lydja Masterjohn
Parent Coordinator
Warren Elementary School
Warren

Leigh Ann Orr
Parent Information Center
Chelsea Public Schools

Estelle Sawyer
Teacher and Coordinator of Parent Outreach
Memorial Middle School
Fitchburg

Robyn Winick
Community Education Advisory Council
Parent Involvement Coordinator
McCarthy-Towne School
Acton

**PARENT AND COMMUNITY LEADERS**

Louise Bernard, President
Revere PTA Council

Janet Brand
School Site Council
C.G. McDonough City School
Lowell

Patricia Campbell, President
Massachusetts Parent-Teacher-Student Association

Elaine Czesnick, President
Somerville PTA Council

Bettie Feruzi
Community Education Advisory Council
Assistant Director
Citywide Parents Council
Boston

Michael Gallagher, Chair
Citywide Parents Council
Lowell

Tom Gallagher, President
Springfield Parents Advisory Network

Paula Georges
Citywide Educational Coalition
Boston

Joyce Knippenberg, President
Sandwich PTA

Marianne McAllister
Central Parents Organization
Attleboro High School

Beatriz McConnie-Zapater
Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation
Boston

Hattie McGinnis
Citywide Parents Council
Boston

Diane Molle
Special Needs Parent Advisory Council
Boston

Carla Rabinowitz
Citizens Educational Resource Center
West Boylston

David Scanlin, President
Citywide Parents Advisory Council
Holyoke

Mary Ann Suttie
School Site Council
G.A. McDonough City School
Lowell

Sharon Talmadge
Massachusetts Parent-Teacher-Student Association

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

Earl Avery, Chair
Community Education Advisory Council
Special Assistant to the President
Bentley College

Mary Bacigalupo
Office of the Dean
College of Education
University of Lowell

Ann Bookman
President's Office
Lesley College

Eloise Burdick
N. Adams State College

Don Davies, President
Institute for Responsive Education
Director, Center for Families, Communities and Schools
Boston University

David Day
School of Education
University of Massachusetts/Amherst

David Freitas
Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
Bridgewater State College

Sally Habana-Hafner
Center for Organizational and Community Development
University of Massachusetts/Amherst

Fran Litman
Center for Parenting Studies
Wheelock College

Anne Rittenburg
Harvard Family Research Project
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Susan Swap
Center for Parenting Studies
Wheelock College

Martha Starr
Learning, Evaluation and Consultation Services
University of Massachusetts Medical Center/Worcester

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Barbara Aschheim
Office of Community Education

Susan Adler
Division of Educational Personnel

Jack Baptista
Chapter 1

Lori Connors
Bureau of Early Childhood Education

Roselyn Frank
Division of School Programs

Susan Freedman
Office of Community Education

Linda Gerstle
Bureau of Student Health and Development

Kallister Green
Central Massachusetts Regional Educational Center

Roberta Guillerm
Division of Special Education

Maryann O'Brien
Education of Language Minority Students Bureau

Harold Raynolds, Jr.
Commissioner

Elizabeth Shaeffer
Early Childhood Education Bureau

Juan Tapia
Boston/Chelsea Team

Paula Willis
Office of Educational Equity

Lise Zeig
Division of Special Education

Ross Zerchykov
Office of Community Education

**ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS**

**Community Education Advisory Council**

Diane Dickerson
Director of Youth Programs
Higher Education Information Center

Deborah Niswonger
Chair
Hampshire Regional School Committee

Nancyanne Noone
Youth Programs
Holbrook

Helene Skrzyniarz
Director of Curriculum, Instruction
and Evaluation
Middleboro High School

Glenn Young, Teacher
Brockton Public Schools

**Massachusetts Elementary Principals' Association**

Nadya Higgins
Executive Director

**Massachusetts Middle Level School Administrators Association**

Edmund Mahoney
Executive Director

**Massachusetts Parent-Teacher-Student Association**

Diana Gargalianos
Treasurer

Carol Rehm
Cultural Arts Chair

Charlotte Ryan
Editor

Freyda Siegel
Family Education

Mary Turner
Secretary

**Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association**

Richard Neal
Executive Director

## APPENDIX C

## MINI-SUMMIT ON FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

### PROBLEM STATEMENT FOR THE MORNING ROLE-ALIKE GROUP DISCUSSION SESSION: 9:15 - 10 A.M.

We will begin this working meeting with an acknowledgement of some of the most common impediments to comprehensive approaches to family involvement in education. Some of these impediments are as follows:

1. Most schools experience uneven and unrepresentative patterns of involvement: clearly identifiable segments of the parent population are underrepresented in parent involvement activities; many of these parents face economic, cultural, and linguistic barriers to involvement in their children's education.

2. Family and parent involvement is seen as a peripheral, extra-curricula function of the school.

3. Many teachers and administrators lack preparation and adequate training in parent involvement.

4. Many schools perpetuate policies that are disincentives for parent involvement in education.

5. Most of the suggested activities for increased parent involvement and outreach are time and labor consuming and are an invisible add-on to the duties of school staff.

6. Participation requirements in categorical federal and state grant programs that are intended to stimulate parental involvement often fragment a school's efforts to promote parent involvement schoolwide and focus the parents' attention on the discrete programs rather than on the school as a whole.

The role-alike groups (e.g., principals meeting with other principals and school administrators) will be asked to discuss this list and identify other impediments that this working meeting might address in order to expand our understanding of the challenges that face those who are working to build stronger ties between schools and families.

Any additional impediments that are identified in the group discussions will be added to this list. A composite list, that includes the "additional impediments" from each role-alike groups, will be the focus of attention as the mini-summit's agenda moves from identifying problems to developing solutions.

In order to expedite this move from problems to solutions, please take a few minutes to reflect on your own experience. Come prepared to bring your ideas about additional impediments to this first small group session of the mini-summit.

Thank you!